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Letter dated 3 July 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 1 July 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tuluy TANÇ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Letter dated 1 July 1997 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 23 June 1997 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations which was circulated as document A/51/931-S/1997/489.

I wish to state that the allegations put forward in the said letter constitute a gross distortion of the facts pertaining to the matter of Greek Cypriots living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. It is not my intention, therefore, to enter into polemics on this matter, particularly on the eve of the intercommunal talks scheduled to take place in New York from 9 to 13 July 1997. I wish to underline, however, that similar charges have been amply dealt with and refuted in the letter dated 9 April 1997 addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Taner Etkin, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (E/1997/21, annex, appendix).

It will be recalled that in his letter Minister Etkin stressed that the Turkish Cypriot authorities do not practise any discriminatory policy towards Greek Cypriots living in the Karpas region and that, in fact, unilateral goodwill measures aimed at further improving the living standards of the Greek Cypriots residing in the area have been implemented over the last few years. It is noteworthy that the United States State Department report entitled "Cyprus: Humanitarian Issues" of September 1996 describes the living conditions of the Greek Cypriots living in northern Cyprus in the following terms: "While living standards are lower than that in the south, they are on a par with those of Turkish Cypriots in the area."

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about the living conditions of the Turkish Cypriots residing in south Cyprus. The above-mentioned United States State Department report states that "the approximately 360 Turkish Cypriots who live in the south face problems in obtaining documents and complain of harassment, surveillance and some discrimination in obtaining jobs". The United States State Department human rights report for Cyprus (1995) contains similar findings. The inhuman social, economic and racial discrimination suffered by Turkish Cypriots in the south has even been reported by the Greek Cypriot press, notably by the Greek Cypriot daily Alithia of 30 December 1996. The paper reveals that the Turkish Cypriot residential areas in the south are "plagued by poverty, suffering and unemployment".

In view of the above and particularly the upcoming talks in New York, the Greek Cypriot side should desist from engaging in this campaign of disinformation and the fabrication of artificial issues, so that an atmosphere conducive to the finding of an overall solution to the Cyprus question can be created.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of
Northern Cyprus